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Letter, Virginia Brainard to Dudley and Merl Brainard [November 2, 1941]

Virginia Brainard

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Sunday, Nov. 2.
1941

Dear Mother and Daddy,

I want to come home. I mean right away. I'm giving it up. My mid-quarter grades come Saturday and I got two O's and a B. I don't want to keep on in school and be thrown out at Christmas. Last fall I thought "I can pull them up. I know I can." And every quarter after that I thought the same thing. But now I don't have any confidence in myself at all. I can't see how I can possibly make the grade.

I know only one thing that helps me take this — I'm a journalist and a darn good one, too. My one B was in P. Journalism. That does mean alot to me because God consistently gives out C's at mid-term. Its very rarely that he gives a B as a ~~first~~ grade at mid-quarter. ^{He gave only 5 — three guys girls and 2 of the boys got them —} So maybe there's one thing that I can do. But what good is it going to do me to be an outstanding journalist if I can't stay in school? Just when I've found my field I'm not going to be able to stay in it.

I don't know what the trouble is. I one of my

"D" was in Chemistry, of course. So I immediately went and had a long talk with my instructor and he helped me very much. He told me how to study it and to get right down to the bottom of things and learn the systems, first - and then everything will fall into line. He also told me to keep him posted as to how I was getting along from time to time for the rest of the quarter. I thought that was pretty decent of a man who has over a hundred in each lecture session.

But my other "D" was in Costumed Design, a mere 3 hour Home Ec. course. I don't know what I'm going to do. I just can't draw fashion figures like the ones in Harper's Bazaar and Vogue. I can design many of my own clothes but I can't draw them on paper. I've never been able to draw.

If I could put my finger on the trouble. I am not stupid - at least I have a fair I.Q. and I'm usually successful in most things I've undertaken. And now I don't want to make a failure out of ~~the~~ my college career - the most important thing in my life.

I put very little. I limit myself to one date

once a week, usually on Saturday night. And I try to completely relax and have a real good time when I am out so that I don't have all work with no recreation.

It's true that I spend all ^{my} afternoons on journalism but that leaves my evenings free for other work. It's only once or twice a quarter that I have to cover evening meetings and lectures for the paper.

I don't know what to do. As far as I'm concerned, the bottom has just fallen out of everything. All I want to do is throw up the whole thing and come home.

Maybe I'd better talk about something pleasant. Last night was the Engineer's Carnival (and my weekly date). You've probably read about it in the Student. I enclose a clipping anyway. I went with Howard Engelbrecht, the boy I've gone with since Feb. Anyway, he's the one who has all my Sat. night dates and he doesn't go out with anyone else, either. It's convenient for both of us because he has to work pretty hard, too. But that's all there is in it. He's a very very nice person and an outstanding student. He is also tall and good looking.

It helps my ego a little bit to know that people like that will go out with me even though I'm lacking in many qualities myself.

Last night Howard was pledged to the Guard of St. Patrick. (I ~~under~~ ^{under}lined that in the clipping.) I was so proud of him! The Guard of St. Patrick is an honorary engineering fraternity. Each year the Engineering Council selects about 35 men from the entire division who are outstanding for scholarship, personality and service to their division. Howard is an agricultural engineer and he was the only one selected from his department. The men are pledged at the Carnival and then made Knights of St. Patrick ~~a~~ during the initiation ceremonies at the intermission of the Engineer's Ball, & in February.

All the pledges had to leave Great Hall just before intermission to get ready for the pledging. The girls who were left behind all sat together at the foot of the stage. It was one of ~~the~~ ^{my} biggest thrills I've ever had — sitting there with the other girls while everyone else was dancing and

our fellows were meeting to be pledged into the ~~Green~~ Guard of St. Patrick. It almost erased all the worries on my ~~the~~ mind & I got my grades that afternoon.

But now, everytime I start to have a good time I come down to earth with a thud. Last night I couldn't help but think that I probably won't be here in Feb. to see him made a Knight of St. Patrick.

After the pledging was over, everyone sat down along the walls of the ballroom and as the fellows came back into the hall one by one their girls got up and walked across the empty floor to be the first to congratulate them. Then everyone else crowded around. It was wonderful.

But I don't know what's going to become of me in all this mess. I can't draw and I can't understand Chemistry. I'm so homesick and blue and discouraged. I wish you were here. Please write to me.

Love,
Virginia

(over)

At a staff meeting this afternoon ^{girls} even compared
grades and every single journalist who's taking
Organic got a D in it. One of the boys got an E
in it, took it over and got a D. Another one flunked
it twice in a row.

Thought of H. Ostrach.

After the phlegging was over everyone
began about the walls of the bathroom and
as the fellows came back into the hall one by
one their girls got up and walked across the
empty floor to be the first to congratulate
them. Then everyone else crowded around.
It was wonderful.

But I don't know what's going to happen
of me in all this mess. I don't know and I
can't understand chemistry. I'm so dumb
and I've been so dumb. I wish you were here
to help me. I'm so dumb.
(over)